Agnew denies contribution charge

CROFTON, Md. (AP) — Spiro T. Agnew said Friday he has never communicated with anyone connected with the Greek government concerning contributions to the Nixon-Agnew campaign.

In a recent copyrighted column, Robert Novak and Rowland Evans indicated that the former vice president had reversed his strong opposition to the military junta in Greece because of sizeable campaign contributions from wealthy Greek-Americans.

The column said the Greek-Americans favored the military regime and had channeled contributions from the Greek government to this country through the Central Intelligence Agency.

The New York Times reported Friday that Agnew had asked the Senate committee investigating the CIA for an opportunity to testify concerning CIA relationships with the Greek junta from 1967 to 1974.

The Times story quoted authoritative sources as saying the testimony would make a substantive addition to the committee's information.

Agnew, in a prepared statement, told The Associated Press Friday, he had asked to testify before the committee "because of the irresponsible rumors and publicity about my having knowledge involving the former Greek government with contributions through the CIA to the Nixon-Agnew campaign."

The former vice president, himself of Greek extraction, said that "the sum and substance of my testimony will be that at no time prior to the 1968 election did I communicate with anyone about contributions from persons residing in Greece. I have any knowledge of communications between anyone connected with the Nixon-Agnew campaign and the Greek government or any representative of the Greek government.

"So far as I then knew, and now know, the members of the Greek government did not participate, either financially or otherwise, in the Nixon-Agnew campaign efforts, and up until this very moment, I have no knowledge of any contacts being made between any representatives of the Papadotoulos government and anyone interested in the Nixon-Agnew campaign of either 1968 or 1972."

The Evans-Novak column said Agnew had been an outspoken opponent of the military junta in Greece and then appeared to change his mind overnight.

The column linked Agnew's change of mind with what it said were sizeable campaign contributions from Greek-Americans, sympathetic to the junta, and who had been supplied with money to give the Nixon Agnew campaign from the Greek government.